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## Aerospace integration key to meeting challenges

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WASHINGTON -- Aerospace integration is a key pillar in the Air Force's vision to meet the nation's requirements in a rapidly changing world, Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters told aerospace industry leaders May 12.

"We have been thinking a lot about the future of the Air Force in the 21st century," Secretary Peters said. "The next two decades will present many unknowns. Our challenge will be to create a system of [integrated] aerospace systems that will be able to meet the full spectrum of [future] national security requirements --without being able to predict today precisely what those requirements will be.

"The integration of our aerospace forces and people is a critical element of our plan," he said. "This process will break down stovepipes between air and space, leading to integrated solutions with air and space systems that are more effective and efficient than separate systems."

According to Secretary Peters, aerospace integration will permit Air Force commanders to provide a wide range of services including peacetime surveillance, delivery of humanitarian supplies, contingency operations and strategic attack from the United States.

By focusing on operations, the Air Force will not just enhance air power, but will capitalize on the broader capabilities of aerospace power to field a more capable warfighting aerospace force, dominating the vertical dimension and achieving decisive results in conflict.

To achieve its aerospace integration, the Air Force must have commanders who are versed in all phases of aerospace operations and are as comfortable with space-based sensors as with aircraft systems, he said.

"We need to ensure Air Force leaders understand the capabilities that exist in air and space today so they may better envision the systems of tomorrow," Secretary Peters said. "Our new Aerospace Basic Course, taught to all young officers entering active duty, is designed to train our future leaders to feel comfortable in both air and space operations."



Global positioning satellites provide real-time accurate, three-dimensional location information critical to enabling the Air Force to employ precision weapons such as the Joint Direct Attack Munition.

The Developing Aerospace Leaders program, now on the drawing board, will allow Air Force people to experience a broad range of fields to create mid-career generalists more familiar with the capabilities and possibilities of integrated air and space operations, he said.



Airborne intelligence technicians aboard an Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center capsule gather information from various aerospace sources to quickly analyze current combat situations and enable battlefield commanders to direct offensive air support toward fast-developing targets.

These courses will provide Air Force leaders with a new mindset required for true aerospace integration.

According to Secretary Peters, "It should make no difference to the warfighter whether information comes from unmanned aircraft, space-based sensors or traditional airborne sources. What should be of concern is that information necessary to support decisions is collected seamlessly from wherever it is first produced and given in fused format ready for (decision making)."

Supporting these new aerospace leaders will be operations centers that permit them to fuse multi-source information into decision-quality information quickly and accurately, he said. "Our ongoing efforts to build a standardized Aerospace Operations Center should produce a facility where the aero-integrated (leaders) of the future can work across disciplines to operate and command integrated forces, interoperable across Air Force systems, within the joint team and with our coalition partners."

The service has also set up the Aerospace Integration Center at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., to improve the effectiveness of Aerospace Operations Centers. Since the mid-1990s, the Air Force Space Warfare Center has complemented the Air Warfare Center in developing tactics, techniques and procedures for warfighters, and the Weapons School Space Division has provided graduate-level education for space and missile operations officers.

In order to make this systems-of-systems approach work, Secretary Peters said, "We must have a balanced, integrated and time-phased budget plan that modernizes systems as a whole and gets us away from our current-day enthusiasm for particular weapons systems.

"Our vision for the future is one of integration of our systems and our people," he said. "We will use the best systems we have available for each task, without regard to whether that system works in the air or in space, and fuse them into an integrated whole.

"It also involves thoughtful changes to our people, organization, employment concepts, equipment, support for the joint team and our role in the broader aerospace community," the secretary said.

"Providing the foundation will be our remarkable men and women, the leaders of the full-spectrum aerospace force of the 21st century."

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